

SECOND
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF THE
FREE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION
OF
FRIENDS
OF
OHIO
YEARLY MEETING,

Held 9th of Ninth month, 1851.



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The Board of Managers of the Free Produce Association of Friends of Ohio Yearly Meeting, in presenting to the Association their Second Annual Report would respectfully offer the reading of their minutes as affording the most satisfactory evidence of what has claimed the attention of the Board during the current year. The minutes having been read the report continues.

Thus the Association will perceive, that though the Board have been anxious to embrace every right opening for advancing the objects of our organization, yet they must acknowledge with sorrow, that they have been able to accomplish much less for the suppression of the monster evil against which they are contending, than would have been desirable.

The Board in addition to the publication of the last Annual Report; and the proceedings of the Annual Meeting in the Non-Slaveholder, as directed, had 1000 copies of said report and proceedings together with the Constitution and which we are organized, published in pamphlet or tract form for general distribution: principally among the members of our religious society.

They have also in type and about ready to issue 1000 copies of a tract styled Plea of Necessity, &c., which in addition to a stereotype edition of 1000 copies of the tract styled "Considerations on the use of Slave Labor Products, addressed to the Friends of Ohio Yearly Meeting," makes an aggregate of 32,000 pages published and circulated during the current year. To this add the 50,000 pages of tracts published the last year and it gives us the total aggregate of 82,000 pages of Free Labor tracts issued and circulated by the association within the last eighteen months. This appears but a feeble effort when we consider the magnitude of the evil against which these efforts are directed:—yet we have confidence in believing that under the blessings of our Heavenly Father, even this small effort will have its influence in awakening some at least to a sense of their relations to slavery, and the obligations resting upon them to endeavor to abstain from any participation in its support. Since the stoppage of the Non-Slaveholder at the close of the last year, the publication of tracts appears to be almost the only medium through which the friends of the Free Produce movement could disseminate information on this question. Whether as an association we should not make some movement towards aiding in the resuscitation of the Non-Slaveholder or opening up some other channel of communication by which all the advocates of the Free Labor enterprise might be able freely and easily to communicate with each other, and thereby secure something like concert of action in this laudable undertaking is a subject which the Board believe to be well worthy of serious considerations. That in unity of action there is strength, admits not of a doubt. We acknowledge the truth of the principle in all our intercourse with the world; and in every undertaking from the highest to the lowest. Associated action is resorted to for the promotion of almost every thing that is great or good, or praiseworthy. Our assemblage on the present occasion is an acknowledgement of this great principle—and might we not to great advantage extend this combination of effort, to all the friends of the measure at least within the limits of the several Yearly Meetings upon this continent. The circle of our influence would thus be vastly expanded, and that influence itself would be increased, in all probability in a geometrical ratio, to the number included in the combination. The advocates of American slavery are but too well aware of the powerful influence of associated action in the support of this iniquitous system.

On all questions touching the interests or permanency of this Institution, they boast of having been able to act in concert. Hence it is, that a small and otherwise inconsiderable minority, have heretofore been enabled both in church and state, to exert an almost undisputed controlling influence. Hence it is, that slavery has been enabled to lay her rude and ruthless hands upon almost every department of our National government, and direct the legislation in such a way, as to build up and strengthen its power. The crowning act of degeneracy in the legislation of our country—the controlling influence of the slave power, and the degradation to which professing freemen and christians may be reduced, is exemplified in that most iniquitous of all legal enactments, the Fugitive Slave Law, as passed by a late American Congress. Under the specious pretext of preserving the Union, but in reality of “binding the North to the car of slavery,” the slave-owning oligarchy of our nation by a concert of action among themselves, were enabled to delude into the support of their measures, a sufficiency of supple politicians in Congress to pass the infamous Fugitive Bill, above referred to; and a sufficiency of northern traders who are willing to barter their principles with their goods and wares; to enable them in some measure to carry out its iniquitous provisions, even in those portions of our beloved country where we have been accustomed to believe the Genius of Liberty sat enthroned upon the affections of the people. In witnessing these triumphs of slavery the casual observer might be induced to feel great discouragements for the cause of freedom and humanity; and might suppose that there was little could be done that would be calculated to effect any good. But such is not the case. Though slavery may now appear to have obtained a signal victory, and though thousands may have proved recreant to the cause of humanity from whom we had hoped for better things, yet we feel warranted in holding out the language of encouragement to our friends to persevere in the good work in which we are engaged.

At no antecedent period in the history of our country has the public mind been so aroused to a sense of the inherent odiousness and sinfulness of slavery; and its perfect antagonism to the genius of our institutions. Hundreds and thousands of those who have heretofore been disposed to stand aloof from the examination of this question as being something in which they had no interest whatever, are now fully aroused to a sense of the obligations resting upon them, to

and their influence for the overthrow of this system of wrong and outrage.

That branch of the great anti-slavery movement in which we are at present more particularly interested is now claiming vastly greater attention than at any other period. "Righteous and inoffensive as it has always been—it has heretofore been made the butt of heartless ridicule and un-sparing condemnation—and this not by a pro-slavery press, not by the bitter enemies of the slave, but by many of those professing to be ardent friends of justice and humanity." But such with few exceptions is no longer the case. "The most casual observer is beginning to see clearly the intimate relation between slavery and the consumption of its products. The maxim, that "he who gives the motive makes his brother's sin his own," is no longer questioned by any, and that "it is the market for Slave Produce which gives energy and extension to the system of slavery." Equally clear to the comprehension of those who will take the trouble to examine this subject is the fact, that the northern merchant who purchases the cotton, sugar and rice of the southern planter—the proud and haughty planter of the sunny south, the task-master who plies the gory lash to the lacerated back of the toiling slave to extract the greatest possible amount of labor—the auctioneer who cries his human wares in the market, and who sells these helpless victims of cupidity like oxen in the shambles; yea even the heartless, murderous slave-trader, are each and all of them only so many agents employed by, and for the consumer, in extracting and transferring to him the products of the unrequited toil of the poor down-trodden suffering slave.

Though the Board had fondly hoped under a resolution of the last Annual Meeting, to make a distinct report of the state of the Free Labor movement in our own limits, yet we regret to say that only one of all the committees appointed responded to the objects of their appointment, we cannot furnish that information in detail, from the various quarters which would have been so interesting and important as a basis on which to found our future action. So far however as the information of the Board extends, both among Friends and others, there is an increased and still growing interest. There are but few of those who profess to be governed by moral and christian influences, who will not cheerfully admit, that they would give a decided preference to the productions of free over those of slave labor. Though our Friends cannot yet be induced to take any decided action in

a society capacity on this most important question, yet we have the fullest assurance that if those who have already enlisted in this good work, shall only act with proper firmness, forbearance and consistency, the time is not far distant when any little prejudices that may have been imbibed from want of a proper examination of the subject, shall have melted away, we shall stand forth united on this question as one man. Within the limits of the other Yearly Meetings on this continent there is a constantly increasing interest manifested, and in many places efforts are making to supply themselves with free labor goods. During the sitting of the last Yearly Meeting at Richmond, Indiana, a meeting was held at which a very large number of friends were in attendance—in which the free labor movement was very fully and satisfactorily set forth and many felt themselves greatly encouraged to endeavor to avoid making use of the products of slave labor.

In England both Friends and others appear to have become fully aroused to the importance of the Free Labor movement "as an efficient auxiliary for the abolition of slavery and that without the free labor principle the anti-slavery character is incomplete." In a small periodical published at New Castle upon Tyne, styled the "Slave: his wrongs, and their remedy," the editor in a late number remarks: "Many of our readers are aware that during the past three years, earnest efforts have been made by friends of the negro in the north of England and elsewhere to discourage as much as possible, the vile system of slavery, by refusing its products. The agitation for this object, styled the "Free Labor Movement" had been gradually gaining strength, when the arrival in England of Henry Highland Garret, a colored gentleman (once a slave in Maryland, and late Pastor of the Tabernacle at Geneva, in the State of New York,) gave it an impetus that bids fair to place it amongst the popular movements of the day. About twenty-six Free Labor Associations have already been established chiefly in consequence of the lectures of H. H. Garret.

In proof of the interest which has thus been excited, we may mention, that notwithstanding the issue of more than one hundred thousand free labor tracts and papers from the press at Newcastle during the last three months, it has been found extremely difficult to meet the demand for information on this important branch of the anti-slavery enterprise.

Thus as we have said before, the Board believe they have grounds for holding out the language of encouragement and

cheer t. members of this Association, to persevere in the good work in which you have embarked. Remember that the eyes not only of a large proportion of our own religious professors, but also of the world are upon you. Many of those are at least professed friends of the slave, but have not felt themselves called upon in bearing their testimony against slavery, to abstain from the use of its products. Your firmness and consistency in this respect, is the strongest argument that could be adduced to many of them that your position is correct. They have not yet been able to see what influence their abstinence could have upon the abolition of slavery, and though you might not be able fully to convince them of that, you can at least show them the safety and consistency of forbearance. Whilst we would urge upon all the necessity and obligations resting upon them to labor faithfully and unremittingly for the extension of the free labor principle, we should remember to be charitable towards those who differ from us in sentiment. We should bear in mind that it is but yesterday as it were since we occupied the position which they do now, and that the best of us fall far short of doing what we might think was demanded at our hands, did we occupy the position of the poor slave. In conclusion, therefore, we would add—acquit you as men and women who have the fear of God, and the good of your fellow men at heart. Be active—be vigilant—be consistent—let not your hands weary in well-doing. And though you may be called upon to make some sacrifices in so doing—remember that those sacrifices if made in a proper spirit, will be well pleasing in the sight of Him whose we are and whom we profess to serve.

Signed on behalf of the Board by

GEORGE K. JENKINS, Sec'y.